2009 Annual School Report
Belltrees Public School

NSW Public Schools – Leading the way
Messages

Principal's message

It is my pleasure to present the 2009 Annual School Report for Belling Public School.

The 2009 school year saw a number of exciting new initiatives implemented, including an Art Therapy program, and an environmental education focus. Our number one priority is to provide excellence in literacy and numeracy learning and teaching, for every student.

Our parent community has worked incredibly hard throughout the year, and are to be congratulated on raising well over $16000.00 to raise funds to purchase and construct a large sports shed / storage facility.

I certify that the information in this report is the result of a rigorous self-evaluation process and is a balanced and genuine account of the school’s achievements and areas for development.

Mrs Kate Jones

P&C and/or School Council message

The Belling P&C continues to work closely with the Principal and staff, to provide resources that would not otherwise be possible in a small school.

At the end of the 2008 school year, it was decided that the school’s greatest need was a sports and storage shed.

Even though we have a very small group, most parents enthusiastically participated in a focussed fundraising program, that succeeded in raising approximately $16000.00.

The major fundraiser was an auction, held in the school grounds. A massive amount of planning and preparation was involved, and the local branch of Elders must be thanked for their involvement and guidance in helping us to raise more than $10000.00.

Mr James Carter – P&C President

Student representative’s message

School has been lots of fun this year. We have enjoyed doing lots of new things, but the best has been our art classes with Mrs Chambers, and also being involved in the VegWatch program.

In class, we have started a buddy reading program that we do every day with our partners, and we think that our speed maths sessions have made us much faster and better in remembering basic facts.

Ianna Malcolm and Jackson Cook

School Captains

School context

Student information

It is a requirement that the reporting of information for all students must be consistent with privacy and personal information policies.

Student enrolment profile

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ianna and Ian performing in the SCADS Drama Festival
Student attendance profile

Attendance levels showed a marked improvement in 2009. The school's rates of attendance were above region and state average.

Management of non-attendance

The school has made a concerted effort to raise levels of attendance in 2009. Brochures and items are regularly included in the school newsletter, drawing attention to DET expectations for attendance.

Parents are contacted if their child is absent from school, without notification, and reminder notes are sent home each fortnight, for any unexplained absences.

Class sizes

In March 2003 the Government announced its commitment to publish primary class sizes in annual school reports in order to provide parents with as much local information as possible.

The following table shows our class sizes as reported at the 2009 class size audit conducted on Wednesday 18 March 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roll Class</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total per Year</th>
<th>Total in Class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALLKIDS 1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALLKIDS 2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALLKIDS 3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALLKIDS 4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALLKIDS 5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALLKIDS 6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALLKIDS K</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Structure of classes

The students at our school learn in a multi-stage classroom, with all grades and learning stages catered for.

Our school at a glance

Students

The school currently has 14 students enrolled – 8 boys and 6 girls.

These students are drawn from surrounding farms, from the “Belltrees” property, and from the nearby villages of Gundy and Moonan Flat.

Staff

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

A teaching principal leads a staff of 1 regular casual teacher, three other casual teachers, two permanent school administrative managers (who share one position) and one general assistant.

Financial summary

This summary covers funds for operating costs and does not involve expenditure areas such as permanent salaries, building and major maintenance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of financial summary:</th>
<th>30/11/2009</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Income</strong></td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance brought forward</td>
<td>42242.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global funds</td>
<td>39777.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied funds</td>
<td>18060.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School &amp; community sources</td>
<td>13101.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest</td>
<td>990.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trust receipts</td>
<td>2677.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canteen</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total income</strong></td>
<td>vv116850.81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Expenditure**            | $         |
| Teaching & learning        |           |
| Key learning areas         | 19427.65  |
| Excursions                 | 3626.83   |
| Extracurricular dissections| 7380.03   |
| Library                    | 4699.89   |
| Training & development     | 1720.35   |
| Tied funds                 | 36635.79  |
| Casual relief teachers     | 4367.21   |
| Administration & office    | 16971.20  |
| School-operated canteen    | 0.00      |
| Utilities                  | 4123.74   |
| Maintenance                | 6247.31   |
| Trust accounts             | 2657.97   |
| Capital programs           | 0.00      |
| **Total expenditure**      | 107857.97 |
| **Balance carried forward**| 8992.84   |

A full copy of the school's 2009 financial statement is available, on request, from the school office.
School and Student Performance 2009

Academic

In the National Assessment Program, the results across the Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 literacy and numeracy assessments are reported on a scale from Band 1 to Band 10.

The achievement scale represents increasing levels of skills and understandings demonstrated in the assessments.

Yr 3: from Band 1 (lowest) to Band 6 (highest for Year 3)
Yr 5: from Band 3 (lowest) to Band 8 (highest for Year 5)
Yr 7: from Band 4 (lowest) to Band 9 (highest for Year 7)
Yr 9: from Band 5 (lowest) to Band 10 (highest for Year 9)

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 3

In 2009, two Year 3 students completed the National Assessment Program (NAPLAN) in Literacy.

Owing to the small number of students participating, detailed results cannot be reported, for privacy reasons.

Parents of students have been notified of individual results, and have been given the opportunity to discuss them in detail with staff.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 3

In 2009, two Year 3 students completed the NAPLAN in Numeracy.

Owing to the small number of students participating, detailed results cannot be reported, for privacy reasons.

Parents of the students have been notified of individual results, and have been given the opportunity to discuss them in detail with staff.

Literacy – NAPLAN Year 5

In 2009, two Year 5 students completed the NAPLAN in Literacy.

Owing to the small number of students participating, detailed results cannot be reported, for privacy reasons.

Parents of the students have been notified of individual results, and have been given the opportunity to discuss them in detail with staff.

Numeracy – NAPLAN Year 5

In 2009, two Year 5 students completed the NAPLAN in Numeracy.

Owing to the small number of students participating, detailed results cannot be reported, for privacy reasons.

Parents of the students have been notified of individual results, and have been given the opportunity to discuss them in detail with staff.

Achievements / Significant Programs

Arts

Drama - the whole school performed “Robin Hood” in the SCADS Drama Festival for schools.

Our performance was awarded equal first place in the competition, and a number of individual awards were presented to our students, including best actor Jackson Cook. Other major awards were presented to Ianna Malcolm, Ian Carter, Hugh Price, Gilbert O’Brien and William Price.

Art Therapy - Mrs Aurelie Chambers, an internationally renowned art therapist, worked with the students every week on a social skills program combined with art. Focus areas for discussion were bullying, respect, caring for others, honesty and teamwork.

Musica Viva - Students travelled to Rouchel Public School to participate in the Musica Viva concert series.
**Sport**

All students participated in a structured daily health and fitness program, which included dance, power walking, skipping and tabloid activities.

Four students travelled to Sydney to compete in the NSW PSSA Athletics Championships, in the small schools relay. They were supported by a very proud group of parents and friends.

All students participated in the school’s intensive swimming and lifesaving program, and competed as team in inter-school swimming, cross country and athletics carnivals.

Our school team was awarded the championship trophy for the march past and best presented school at the Northern Upper Hunter Small Schools Amateur Athletics Association (NUHSSAAA) Sports Day.

*The relay team gave their best in Sydney.*

**Other**

**Cattle Care** - our school’s innovative Cattle Care program continued to develop strongly in 2009. All students aged 8 years and older were keen participants in the many opportunities that were provided.

The school team competed in four major competitions – the Upper Hunter Show, the Sydney Royal Easter Show, the Singleton Beef Spectacular and the Upper Hunter Beef Bonanza.

The students achieved a number of championship ribbons and other awards, thanks to outstanding sponsors and helpers to help achieve these results – James and Karen Carter, Kay Payne, of Elite Poll Herefords, Belltrees Pastoral, Mrs Margaret Carter, the Australian Hereford Society and the many community volunteers who supervised lunch time sessions.

The school received a district Education Week award in recognition of the community’s ongoing participation in developing and promoting the cattle care program.

**Environmental Education** - during 2009, a focus across all learning programs was the local environment, and ways in which we could preserve it for the future.

Our school was selected to be a pilot school in the innovative VegWatch program, in conjunction with the Hunter River Catchment Management Authority. The students took responsibility for recording changes and growth to a local native vegetation site over a twelve month period.

This program complements our role as a Waterwatch site, whereby various river readings are regularly uploaded, to assist in preserving the Hunter River.

A former parent donated a worm farm to the school, and visited on a regular basis to work with the children.

A grey water recycling system was installed to provide underground irrigation to the school playground, with the assistance of federal government funding.

**Significant programs and initiatives**

**Aboriginal education**

During 2009 school programs continued to show an Aboriginal perspective, especially in our HSIE and COGS units.

As our community has no indigenous members it is necessary for the school to provide avenues for our students to be introduced to guests and guest speakers from a variety of cultural backgrounds, whenever possible.

**Multicultural education**

Senior students joined with other Upper Hunter primary and secondary students to celebrate Harmony Day. This opportunity enabled the students to experience differing cultural groups that exist in our local community.

Staff, students and community members celebrated St Patrick’s Day, with traditional celebrations, food and entertainment.

**Respect and responsibility**

We strive to encourage excellence, responsibility, respect, cooperation, participation, care, fairness and democracy, and to ensure that these values are embedded throughout the curriculum.

In 2009, we introduced a Social Skills program that includes an art therapy initiative, and a weekly “circle of sharing”.

The school is proud of its achievements in developing children with sound ethics and values, who have a deep respect for their community.
Minimum standards

The Commonwealth Government sets minimum standards for reading, writing, grammar and punctuation, spelling and numeracy for years 3, 5, 7 and 9.

The performance of the students in our school in the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy is compared to these minimum standards. The percentages of our students achieving at or above these standards are reported below:

| Percentage of Year 3 students at our school achieving at and above minimum standard |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Reading            | 100             |
| Writing           | 100             |
| Spelling          | 100             |
| Punctuation and grammar | 100             |
| Numeracy          | 100             |

| Percentage of Year 5 students at our school achieving at and above minimum standard |
|---------------------------------|-----------------|
| Reading            | 100             |
| Writing           | 100             |
| Spelling          | 100             |
| Punctuation and grammar | 100             |
| Numeracy          | 100             |

Progress in Literacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average progress in reading between Year 3 and Year 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Progress in Numeracy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average progress in numeracy between Year 3 and Year 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Progress on 2009 targets

Target 1
To ensure that spelling and grammar skills are secure in all stage groups.

Our achievements include:
- teaching staff have visited other small schools to view examples of best practice in spelling programs;
- a full stocktake of all literacy resources and teacher support material was completed, along with a reorganisation of resources to allow easy access; and
- teachers have compiled assessment scope and sequence documents from other small schools, and have commenced designing a document that is appropriate for the needs of our students.

Target 2
To promote speed and accuracy in basic numeracy computations.

Our achievements include:
- involvement in a small schools numeracy network once per term, where a regional mathematics consultant has provided invaluable advice and support;
- the implementation of a K-6 scope and sequence for all areas of mathematics; and
- all students have been participating in stage appropriate speed maths sessions twice per week. Approximately 83% of students have achieved 100% accuracy on a regular basis.

Target 3
To further optimise the students’ access to, and ability to fully utilise, excellent programs in technology.

Our achievements include:
- revising the school’s scope and sequence, to ensure that the use of technology is embedded across all curriculum areas;
- senior students were given the task of being “computer buddies” with the infants students, on a daily basis; and
- every student using technology every day, in both structured and informal settings.

Key evaluations
It is a requirement for all NSW public schools to conduct at least two annual evaluations – one related to educational and management practice and the other related to curriculum. In 2009 our school carried out evaluations of Management and Writing.

Educational and management practice
Management

Background
In a small school, day to day management of the school and its community requires a great deal of teamwork and prior planning. It is important to regularly review this area, to ensure that school management and communication remains at a very high level.

Findings and conclusions
Staff, parents and students were surveyed, to seek feedback on the current standard of school management.

75% of staff felt that school management was of an appropriate standard, however a common concern was raised about the lack of notice given for some excursions and activities.

100% of students indicated that they knew exactly what was happening every day at school, and said that it made them “feel safe”.

80% of parents felt that overall management was satisfactory, but most were in agreement that they would like earlier notification of school events and excursions.

20% of parents surveyed were very unhappy with management of the school, and believed that the principal was not fair and equitable in dealing with management and other issues.

Future directions
In 2010, the principal, and staff where necessary, will review and update all management related policy documents, to ensure that these are appropriate to the need of our school.

The principal will develop a timetable at the beginning of each term, and make this available to staff and parents.

Other management tasks, such as reporting to parents and completion of DET paperwork, will be completed as part of a wide ranging self evaluation and review of current procedures that may need improving.
Curriculum
Writing

Background
The school’s 2009 NAPLAN results indicated that, while overall writing skills are well above national benchmarks, progress in this curriculum area is not nearly as high as in other areas.

Findings and conclusions
As part of our stocktake, it was recognised that the school has a pleasing array of teacher resources that assist in the planning of excellent programs in Writing.

Staff members are confident in teaching syllabus writing outcomes. There is a perceived angst with the marking of writing, and the length of time it can take for the students to produce a published writing sample.

Future directions
- The school will become a member school of the Jetsetter Club, whereby their writing has an opportunity to be published on a regular basis, in a professionally prepared magazine format.
- Teaching staff will develop a marking criteria and format for the assessment of children’s writing.

Parent, student, and teacher satisfaction
In 2009 the school sought the opinions of parents, students and teachers about the school.

100% of students indicated that they perceive the school as fair, interesting and a safe and happy place to learn. They believe that the school is providing them with great opportunities to develop their abilities.

80% of parents indicated that the school environment is extremely positive, with the recognition of achievement and effort a high priority.

20% of parents indicated that they were unhappy with the culture of, and leadership at, the school, and felt that communication between school and home was not sufficient.

100% of staff expressed a deep enjoyment of being employed at our school, and felt that their work was valued by parents and students.

Professional learning
All staff participated in professional learning activities which were linked to the school’s three year plan, and completed any mandatory training that was conducted by the department.

These activities included:
- Connected Outcomes Groups (COGs);
- O.H.& S Training;
- asthma training;
- local and regional conferences; and
- School Administration Managers attended relevant courses in Pokolbin and Muswellbrook.

School development 2009 – 2011
At the commencement of 2009 schools produced a School Plan for 2009 – 2011. As with any plan it needs to be updated to meet changes in focus or policy. Having achieved our targets for 2009, there is now a need to set new targets for the future whilst still retaining a focus on Literacy and Numeracy.

Targets for 2010
Target 1
100% of students will achieve stage based outcomes in writing.

Strategies to achieve this target include:
- staff attending in-service training on writing technique and skills development;
- increasing staffs knowledge of department support documents and guidelines; and
- implementing new strategies to improve classroom teaching and lessons.

Our success will be measured by:
- enhanced knowledge and quality teaching specifics assessed by the students achievement in criteria;
- improved compositions of students work and entries into writing competitions and publications; and
- improvement in national testing results in writing
Target 2

100% of students will achieve stage based outcomes in the maths strands of operations (+, -, x, %), and fractions and decimals.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- professional learning provided for staff, to update proficiency in the teaching of operations, fractions and decimals;
- fully utilising available technology to inspire and motivate students in these strand areas; and
- further developing the school's scope and sequence for mathematics, to reflect the school's resources and specific needs.

Our success will be measured by:

- staff implementing new teaching strategies confidently;
- the number of students who are able to access online maths learning opportunities; and
- implementation of a specific school scope and sequence, and its full implementation into class learning by all staff.

Target 3

100% of students will communicate regularly with students from buddy schools, as part of an ongoing study into life in other communities.

Strategies to achieve this target include:

- teaching staff liaising to develop a "connected classroom" opportunity with one NSW city school, and one school in Great Britain;
- staff and students working together to set up timetables for contact, protocols for communicating, arranging purchase of necessary equipment; and
- effective timetabling, so that regular communication can be promoted.

Our success will be measured by:

- a well developed relationship amongst the three schools;
- students confidently communicating with buddy schools on a regular basis; and
- the ability of the students to complete expected activities in the classroom, and maintain a regular online relationship with buddy schools.

About this report

In preparing this report, the self-evaluation committee has gathered information from evaluations conducted during the year and analysed other information about the school's practices and student learning outcomes. The self-evaluation committee and school planning committee have determined targets for the school's future development.

Mrs Kate Jones - Principal
Mrs Karen Carter – P&C representative
Mr Malcolm Blank – staff representative
Mr Tony Charlton – community representative

Learning about our natural environment...

School Contact Information

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Web: www.belltrees-p.schools.nsw.edu.au
School Code: 1182

Parents can find out more information about Annual School Reports, how to interpret information in the reports and have the opportunity to provide feedback about these reports at: